MEDIA MONITORS

ABC Delicious
August, 2008
Page: 74
General News
Region: National
Circulation: 116530
Type: Magazines Lifestyle
Size: 7916.15 sq.cms
Monthly

gold coast hinterland

A weekend escape to Mount Tamborine and the Gold Coast hinterland brings stunning vistas, warm hospitality and dining set among tranquil rainforest.

WORDS **CAROLINE McCONNACHIE** PHOTOGRAPHY **JARED FOWLER**

It's hard to believe that Mount Tamborine is nestled behind the buzzing Gold Coast, only an hour south of Brisbane. Take the ascent into the hinterland and you're ushered into a laidback world that seems miles away from all the glitz and bustle – a population cap ensures the area will never become a high-rise haven.

With skies consistently clear and blue, winter is an ideal time to explore the hinterland and its myriad rainforest trails. Local restaurants and cafes (many of which were established by European migrants) have a welcoming atmosphere and menus brimming with warming soul food.

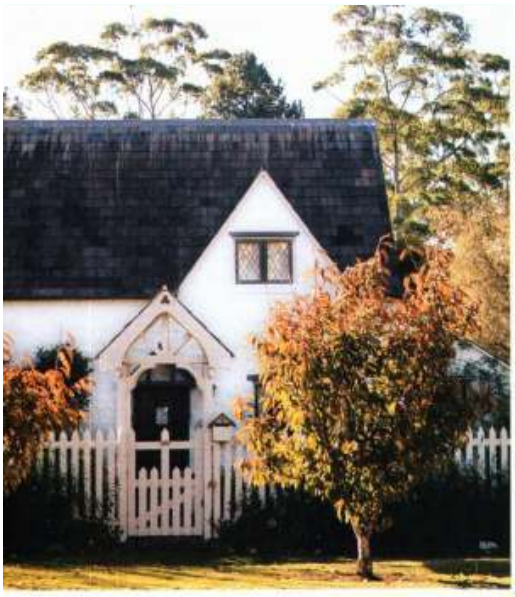
Organic farming and a growing range of produce is big news in this region, so you're bound to taste lots of fresh, quality ingredients and return home with a few edible souvenirs.

Though the region retains a homespun flavour, with plenty of "mum-and-dad" teashops, in recent years it's also attracted a handful of discreet, sensitively designed retreats oozing the glamour you'd usually associate with its coastal cousin.

Overall, the Gold Coast hinterland region makes for a down-to-earth escape perfect for getting back to nature, with just enough style and sophistication.

Copyright Agency Limited (CAL) licenced copy

ABC Delicious
August, 2008
Page: 74
General News
Region: National
Circulation: 116530
Type: Magazines Lifestyle
Size: 7916.15 sq.cms
Monthly



There are plenty of spots to take in the views. Clockwise from left: the elegant setting at Tea & Niceties; a lush rainforest canopy; romantic dining at Ruffles Lodge; winemakers Jon Heslop and Richard Abraham of Witches Falls Winery; charming architecture; Songbirds in the Forest; Pethers' blueberry and almond tart; the entrance to Pethers.

where to eat

SONGBIRDS IN THE FOREST

Experience high-altitude glamour at this restaurant attached to the Songbirds Rainforest Retreat, with full-length windows looking out over the lush green setting. The mod-Oz seasonal menu includes dishes such as seared kangaroo with juniper berries and caramelised turnips, or tempura soft-shell crab with Vietnamese mint. The espresso and hazelnut semifreddo is a triumph and the wines includes organic and biodynamic options. **Lot 10, Tamborine Mountain Rd, North Tamborine, (07) 5545 2563.**

PETHERS

This exclusive hotel's restaurant opened to the public late last year when Melburnians Ilena and Tim Swallow came on as managers. The rainforest outlook, cathedral-like proportions, open fire and bar are reasons enough to visit, but Anthony Henderson's cooking equally captivates. Top-grade ingredients and a pared-back alpine attitude are his trademarks, whether it's in a dish of eggplant involtini with creamy buffalo mozzarella, or braised lamb shank with borlotti beans. **28b Geissmann St, North Tamborine, (07) 5545 4577.**

TEA & NICETIES

Step inside and soak up the wedding party atmosphere at this spot that exclusively does high tea: there's an elaborate cake decoration display, chairs wrapped with gold bows, and tables beautifully set with Royal Albert's finest. Allow two hours for the high tea – a procession of tiered stands with miniature cakes, feather-light scones and dainty sandwiches – and be sure to save room for the handmade peppermint chocolates. Open Thursday to Saturday by booking only. **Shop 1, 21 Southport Ave, Eagle Heights, (07) 5545 3645.**

Copyright Agency Limited (CAL) licenced copy

ABC Delicious
August, 2008
Page: 74
General News
Region: National
Circulation: 116530
Type: Magazines Lifestyle
Size: 7916.15 sq.cms
Monthly

the guide.

CAFE ELLA

This cafe housed in a garden nursery wins the locals' vote with its natural surrounds, amiable service and hearty food. Take a seat under the cedar tree for the full English breakfast, or visit at lunchtime, where you can tuck in to owner Ella Rankin's beef Burgundy pie and hand-cut chips. You can also call in anytime for great sweets, such as warm apple and blackberry frangipane tart. **32 Alpine Tce, Mount Tamborine, (07) 5545 0697.**

THE POLISH PLACE

With jaw-dropping views of the Great Dividing Range, this Tamborine stalwart has a resolutely Polish atmosphere (down to the staff in traditional costume), which remains unchanged after 25 years. Expect warm hospitality from owners Ania and Phil Sowter as you choose from dishes fit for mountain trekkers, whether it's veal shank with red cabbage and mash, or roast free-range duck and *gnocki* with apples and sour cherries. Traditionalists can drink vodka or Polish beer. **333 Main Western Rd, North Tamborine, (07) 5545 1603.**

HERITAGE WINERY MOUNT TAMBORINE

This quaint weatherboard building is a 1930s church that was rescued from demolition in Burleigh Heads, transported and positioned on the escarpment's edge. Nowadays, it houses a grand cellar door and restaurant that turns out wintry classics at lunchtime, including red wine and beef hotpot with pastry, or slow-cooked coq au vin. Call for seasonal Friday and Saturday night openings. **Cnr Bartle and The Shelf rds, Mount Tamborine, (07) 5545 3144.**

MARKS & GARDNER GALLERY AND VERANDAH CAFÉ

The food at this picturesque art space is simple. Daily specials use much of co-owner Janene Gardner's farm produce. You'll find the likes of quiche Lorraine; roast vegetable and pesto salad; or pumpkin soup. Freshly baked scones are always a certainty, too. **69 Main Western Rd, North Tamborine, (07) 5545 4992.**

SPICE OF LIFE CAFE

Alex Baan and Heike Edrich's cafe is a village favourite with its something-for-everyone approach and unpretentious setting. Start the day with eggs Benedict or Brookfarm muesli. If it's on, the Witches Chase goat's cheese omelette is a must. Also look out for specialty breads such as apple bread or fruit and nut toast. There's always a selection of curries and salads, and continental cakes made from Heike's grandmother's recipes. **28a Main St, North Tamborine, (07) 5545 3553.**

Across the road, you can lounge by the fire at contemporary Forest Cafe (13 Main St, North Tamborine, (07) 5545 4916), with Merlo coffee and the weekend papers.

MOUNT TAMBORINE COFFEE PLANTATION

Behind their humble cafe, owners Kees and Maria van Rigssen run an organic coffee plantation. Three Arabica bean varieties form the house blend and there's also a Ugandan roast called Black Magic. Call ahead between now and December and maybe see the couple harvesting the crop. Closed Friday and Saturday. **64 Alpine Tce, Mount Tamborine, (07) 5545 3856.**

And for Lebanese cuisine and live music, go to Karnak Restaurant (10 MacDonnell Rd, Mount Tamborine, (07) 5545 4055).

where to shop

WITCHES CHASE CHEESE COMPANY

After three years sailing around the world, Meredith and Andre Morris established a dairy here, selling premium Jersey-milk cheese, yoghurt and ice cream. Alongside their line-up of Tamembert, washed rind, blue, Caerphilly and fromage frais, are seasonal goat's milk cheeses, and a just-released cloth-bound cheddar that's been aged for 18 months. Their new home (opening soon) will include a sleek brewery and diner. **93 Beacon Rd, North Tamborine, (07) 5545 1696 (moving to 165-185 Long Rd, Eagle Heights, (07) 5545 2032).**

THE OLIVE BRANCH

Find the usual health food store staples here, such as seeds, dried fruits and organic flours. Also stock up on Asian sauces, rice noodles, Maleny avocado oil, Italian cheese and free-range eggs. **Shop 6, 15 Main St, North Tamborine, (07) 5545 0499.**

SPICE OF LIFE DELI

Catering to the local European population, Spice of Life sells assorted jams, almond pastes and dark chocolate. Browse for Mount Tamborine's Bush Spice dukkah, The Grainge jams, olive oil from Queensland's Gwydir Grove, Byron Bay harissa and chai teas. **See Where to Eat.**

THE GREEN SHED

This farmers' market is a hinterland highlight. The collective behind it gathers organic produce from the region, with a few other Brissie ingredients too, then sets a uniform price per item and sells everything under the one green roof. Sundays, 7am-noon. **The Showground, Main Western Rd, Mount Tamborine.**

Leon's Fruit & Veg (Shop 5, 15 Main St, North Tamborine, (07) 5545 0700) sells Brisbane produce and Mountain avocados, persimmon, rhubarb, citrus, honey and *babaco* (a fruit that Leon says tastes like champagne). Another reliable source is The Village Greengrocer (Shop 3, 24 Main St, North Tamborine, (07) 5545 2622).

For produce straight from the source, look out for farm gates dotted across the mountain selling avocados, rhubarb, tomatoes, citrus and tamarillo fruit. The Nut Shed farm shop (1459 Tamborine-Oxenford Rd, Wongawallan, (07) 5545 1799) sells sweet, crunchy macadamias.

Tamborine Mountain Butchery (Shop 14, 9-13 Main St, North Tamborine, (07) 5545 1237), has Killarney beef and lamb, farmed rabbit and crocodile. It also has a weekly fish delivery, as does Mountain Meat Supply (Shop 5, 17 Southport Ave, Eagle Heights, (07) 5545 1811).

The unassuming Eagle Heights Bakery (25 Southport Ave, Eagle Heights, (07) 5545 4011) supplies local chefs with organic sourdough, while its fruit loaf with apricots, figs and dates has a loyal following. Tamborine Mountain Bakery (28 Main St, North Tamborine, (07) 5545 1261) has a range of traditional teacakes.

Copyright Agency Limited (CAL) licenced copy

ABC Delicious
August, 2008
Page: 74
General News
Region: National
Circulation: 116530
Type: Magazines Lifestyle
Size: 7916.15 sq.cms
Monthly

Stock up at Spice of Life Cafe & Deli. Clockwise from left: Witches Chase Cheese Company; some of their Jersey-milk cheeses; the rainforest outlook at Pethers; Marks & Gardner Gallery and Verandah Café; Cafe Ella's apple and blackberry frangipane tart.

Copyright Agency Limited (CAL) licenced copy

MEDIA MONITORS

ABC Delicious
August, 2008
Page: 74
General News
Region: National
Circulation: 116530
Type: Magazines Lifestyle
Size: 7916.15 sq.cms
Monthly

the guide.

where to drink

FOX & HOUNDS COUNTRY INN

Explore little Britain inside this converted white stone cottage. Every detail, from red telephone box to Axminster carpet, has an authentic feel, and that's because it is, as owner Ian Thurston imported the lot. Half of the bar is Irish-themed in tribute to his mum, and he serves artisan ales on tap from Mount Tamborine and the Gold Coast. His British chefs turn out accomplished Irish and English classics, as well as Sunday roast lunches and "Ruby Murray" (curry) on Thursdays. **7 Elevation Dr, Wongawallan, (07) 5665 7582.**

When it comes to other pubs, locals divide into two camps: those who favour the St Bernards Hotel (101 Alpine Tce, Mount Tamborine, (07) 5545 1177), a slightly ramshackle mock-Tudor pub with escarpment views and dormant dog, and those who seek the craic at Clancy's Irish Bar & Restaurant (2 Main St, North Tamborine, (07) 5545 1531).

MT TAMBORINE BREWERY

The people behind the Witches Chase Cheese Company (see Where to Shop) are soon to open this slick premises. Brewer Ian Watson, apparently Australia's first beer sommelier, is building a core range of 10 or so varieties, which include an Indian pale ale and a Bohemian-style pilsner. Aside from swotting up on this beverage's colourful history with Ian, you can come for the beer-and-cheese-matching menu. **165-185 Long Rd, Eagle Heights, (07) 5545 2032.**

WITCHES FALLS WINERY

Ambitious winemakers Jon Heslop and Richard Abraham typify the new bloods changing the face of the region, and indeed, the reputation of Queensland's wine industry. While the winery is based in Tamborine, the label's best drop is made with grapes from the Granite Belt to the west. The premium Prophecy Cabernet Sauvignon is an award-winner, and the 2007 Wild Ferment Chardonnay is top-notch, too. Come on the first Sunday of the month for live music. **79 Main Western Rd, North Tamborine, (07) 5545 2609.**

Another cellar door with high aspirations is Aussie Vineyards (32 Hartley Rd, North Tamborine, (07) 5545 2000). At O'Reilly's Canungra Valley Vineyards (Lamington National Park Rd, Canungra Valley, (07) 5543 4011), you'll find good quaffing wines, Sunday jazz, and a historic homestead. Cedar Creek Estate Vineyard & Winery (104-144 Hartley Rd, North Tamborine, (07) 5545 1666) is a cellar door with a difference. Not only do they have a very drinkable fortified Cedar Starboard, the property boasts a network of man-made caves bursting with glow-worms.

TAMBORINE MOUNTAIN DISTILLERY

Colourful owners Michael and Alla Ward grow fruit without chemicals and produce acclaimed liqueurs presented in hand-painted bottles. Come for schnapps, more than 60 flavoured vodkas and the folksy atmosphere. **87-91 Beacon Rd, North Tamborine, (07) 5545 3452.**

where to stay

PETHERS RAINFOREST RETREAT

The drive through rainforest sets the scene for this exclusive escape. Stay in one of the 10 houses here, each built with understated entrances that belie the lavish two-storey suites within. While the lush landscape is the true masterpiece, the other attention-grabbing features at Pethers include enormous spas, elevated king beds, Asian furniture and expansive living quarters. The included breakfast hamper comes filled with fresh pastries, while a restaurant, gym and spa complete the package. From $325 per double, including breakfast. **See Where to Eat, pethers.com.au**

RUFFLES LODGE

This first-class hideaway resides on the peak of quiet Willow Vale. Choose from a range of opulent rooms with terraces, or one of the three new treehouse villas with infinity plunge pools and views to the Gold Coast. There's also the in-house restaurant, two communal pools, and a day spa as of September. From $395 per villa, including breakfast. **423 Ruffles Rd, Willow Vale, (07) 5546 7411, ruffleslodge.com.au.**

SONGBIRDS

Snuggle up on the large sofa and savour this tranquil, leafy outpost. The six villas have an urban red-and-black palette, four-poster beds, spas, plantation shutters and secluded verandahs. Embrace nature along rainforest tracks, find inner peace with a personalised meditation or yoga class, or simply dine in-house at one of the region's top restaurants. From $425 per villa. **See Where to Eat, songbirds.com.au.**

THE ESCARPMENT

New owners have set to work finessing this property that will soon include a restaurant. The six chalets each have a cathedral ceiling, fireplace, courtyard and contemporary, earthy furnishings. From $230 per night with breakfast. **123 Alpine Tce, Mount Tamborine, (07) 5545 3300, escarpment.com.au**

WITCHES FALLS COTTAGES

Personal touches make these five cottages special, as well as private gardens with barbecues, and living fern walls in the conservatory-style bathrooms – you can practice your astronomy in the shower. Breakfast provisions are delivered in the morning, including home-baked bread, Mount Tamborine coffee, eggs from the owners' chickens and your pick of avocados and herbs. From $195 per night, including breakfast hamper. **Cnr Hartley and Main Western rds, North Tamborine, (07) 5545 4411, witchesfallscottages.com.au.**

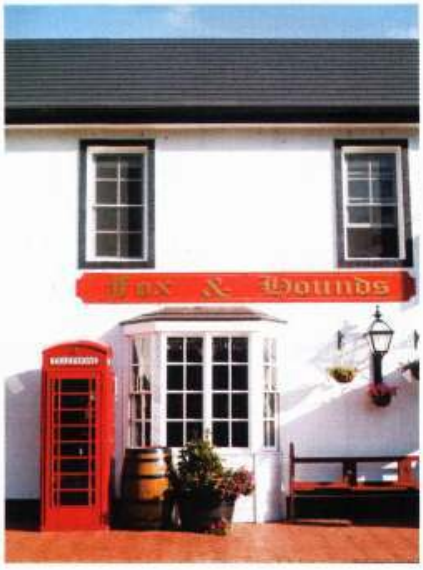
THE POLISH PLACE

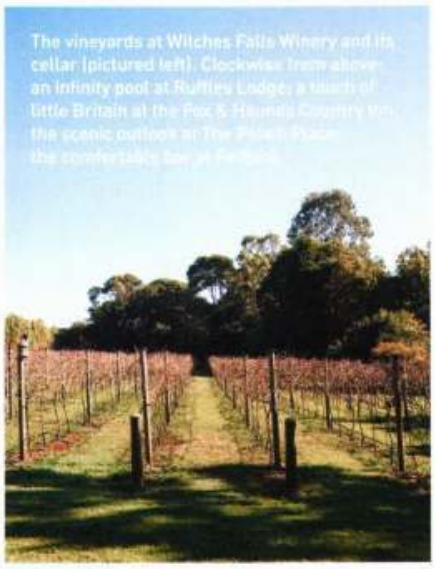
These five European-style cottages have the works – kitchen, fireplace, plasma TV, spa, balcony and panoramic views, plus dinner from the restaurant if you like. From $230 per night with breakfast provisions. **See Where to Eat, polishplace.com.au.**

For an affordable family option, try Cedar Creek Lodges at Thunderbird Park (cnr Tamborine Mountain and Cedar Creek Falls rds, (07) 5545 1468, cedarcreeklodges.com.au). Here, kids can fossick for volcanic rocks, and ride horses and bikes. Lodge rooms from $129 per night, dormitory beds from $27.50, and camping from $8.

Copyright Agency Limited (CAL) licenced copy

ABC Delicious
August, 2008
Page: 74
General News
Region: National
Circulation: 116530
Type: Magazines Lifestyle
Size: 7916.15 sq.cms
Monthly





The vineyards at Witches Falls Winery and its cellar (pictured left). Clockwise from above: an infinity pool at Ruffles Lodge; a touch of little Britain at the Fox & Hounds Country Inn; the scenic outlook at The Private Place; the comfortable bar at Fernbrook

Copyright Agency Limited (CAL) licenced copy

the guide.

map key

Aussie Vineyards 13
Cafe Ella 17
Cedar Creek Estate Vineyard & Winery 13
Cedar Creek Lodges at Thunderbird Park 2
Clancy's Irish Bar & Restaurant 7
Eagle Heights Bakery 11
Forest Cafe 7
Fox & Hounds Country Inn 3
Heritage Winery Mount Tamborine 16
Karnak Restaurant 8
Leon's Fruit & Veg 7
Marks & Gardner Gallery and Verandah Café 12
Mount Tamborine Coffee Plantation 17
Mt Tamborine Brewery 10
Mountain Meat Supply 11
O'Reilly's Canungra Valley Vineyards 18
Pethers 5
Ruffles Lodge 3
Songbirds 6
Spice of Life Cafe & Deli 7
St Bernards Hotel 17
Tea & Niceties 11
The Escarpment 17
The Green Shed 15
The Nut Shed 3
The Olive Branch 7
The Polish Place 14
The Village Greengrocer 7
Witches Chase Cheese Company 10
Tamborine Mountain Bakery 7
Tamborine Mountain Butchery 7
Tamborine Mountain Distillery 4
Witches Falls Cottages 13
Witches Falls Winery 9
Worendo 1

ILLUSTRATION: PRISCILLA NIELSEN

WORENDO

It may be an hour from Mount Tamborine, but Worendo is well worth the detour. Aside from the stunning vistas the property offers of Lamington National Park, co-owner Sue Overell holds cooking classes using native ingredients. There's a choice of two light-filled cottages; one has two bedrooms and a kitchenette, while the other has a queen bed and an outdoor shower. The supplied breakfasts can include quiches or bacon and egg pies. From $380 for two nights. **97 Cedar Glen Rd, Darlington via Beaudesert, (07) 5544 8104, worendo.com.**

things to do

One of the biggest annual events around Mount Tamborine is Springtime on the Mountain, which sees many of the area's private gardens open their gates. The community-run Botanical Garden is also well worth a look-in.

Given the number of national parks, there are plenty of trails to choose from. Spotting glow-worms is a popular pursuit, as is horseriding at Thunderbird Park at Cedar Creek Falls (see Where to Stay).

Opera on the Mountain at Cedar Creek Estate Vineyard & Winery (see Where to Drink) draws an arty crowd in winter.

If you need pampering, Ripple Massage (0438 567 906) uses locally made oils and will visit your accommodation.

For gifts, Nardoo Lavender Shop (41-47 Lahey Rd, North Tamborine, (07) 5545 2308) stocks an extensive range of natural lavender products.

Top off your trip with a hot air balloon ride (Balloon With Hot Air Gold Coast, 1300 766 887) that takes in the spectacular hinterland scenery before arriving at Canungra Valley Vineyards (see Where to Drink) for a champagne breakfast. **d.**

Thanks to Tourism Queensland for assistance with this story. Visit: verygc.com.

Copyright Agency Limited (CAL) licenced copy